

**SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 817**

**WHEREAS**, The Senate of the State of Texas is pleased to recognize the members of the Williams-Livingston family on the grand occasion of their family reunion, which is being held June 5 through 7, 2015, in Kirvin; and

**WHEREAS**, Every year on the first Saturday in June, members of the Williams-Livingston family hold a reunion to celebrate their heritage and to commemorate the birth of Mamie Elizabeth "Mama Mae" Williams; they invite friends from across Texas and the United States and share their celebration of family love and unity, religious roots, and community; and

**WHEREAS**, Family history reveals that the Charles Livingston family moved from Virginia as freed slaves and arrived in the Freestone County area in the early 1800s; the family settled in the area known as Cotton Gin and sharecropped on various local farms; and

**WHEREAS**, Caroline Livingston's family moved from Alabama to Kirvin in Freestone County, arriving in covered wagons, on foot, and on horseback; they settled on the Alfred Carter farm and worked his land; and

**WHEREAS**, Caroline and Charles Livingston's children, Elbert Jefferson, Fannie, Foster, Elizabeth, and Callie, supported their community and were instrumental in establishing Woods Chapel Primitive Baptist Church, which is still an active church today; they also helped create a public school system for their children and for the children from surrounding communities; and

**WHEREAS**, The members of the Williams-Livingston family who host the annual reunion are the descendants of Caroline and Charles Livingston's daughter Elizabeth Livingston; born July 2, 1866, she married Austin Williams, a freed slave from Tennessee, and the couple had 10 children, one of whom was Mamie Elizabeth "Mama Mae" Williams, who was born June 1, 1889; and

**WHEREAS**, Over the course of her long life, Mamie Elizabeth "Mama Mae" Williams became the matriarch of the Williams-Livingston family; she died in 1987 at the age of 98; one of her children, Cathelyn Francis Dawson Butcher, carries on as her living legacy; and

**WHEREAS**, Other strong women who continue to fulfill the traditional role of family matriarch are Ethelyn DeLon Washington Oliver, Patricia Butcher Barton, Thelma Mae Butcher Johnson, Evelyn Butcher Smith, Seri Butcher Nolan, Dianne Pelton Hooper, and Ursula Howard; the patriarch of the family is Johnnie Franklin Carter, with Charles Barton, Robert Powers, Larry Pelton, and Gary Pelton sharing their wisdom and support; Joe Rogers, Kenneth Payne, Joe Fletcher, David Hill, and Archie Pelton Jr. also unselfishly serve the family; and

**WHEREAS**, The branch of the family extending from Mama Mae has successfully worked to reconnect with other branches of the family from across the state and nation, and today, more new family members attend each reunion; and

**WHEREAS**, Williams-Livingston family members are successful men and women who have contributed greatly to their communities through their leadership, their professionalism and entrepreneurial spirit, and their concern for others; they are exemplary citizens who believe strongly in tradition and who instill in their children the values of love, family, and hard work; and

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**WHEREAS**, The annual Williams-Livingston reunion is the manifestation of the family's belief in unity, loyalty, and pride in one's heritage; and

**WHEREAS**, Each year a family member is selected as the recipient of the Mamie Williams Humanitarian Award and recognized at the reunion for unselfish commitment to the furtherance of the family's core values; and

**WHEREAS**, Children and young people are also recognized at the reunion for their academic and athletic accomplishments, and the family also recognizes the wedding anniversaries, employment anniversaries and honors, and births and deaths of family members; now, therefore, be it

**RESOLVED**, That the Senate of the State of Texas, 84th Legislature, hereby extend to the members of the Williams-Livingston family best wishes for a joyous and memorable family reunion and recognize June 6, 2015, as Williams-Livingston Day in this state; and, be it further

**RESOLVED**, That a copy of this Resolution be prepared for the family as a memento of this special occasion.

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President of the Senate

I hereby certify that the above Resolution was adopted by the Senate on May 15, 2015.

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Secretary of the Senate

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Member, Texas Senate